



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

GENERAL ACTIVITY UPDATE

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Photo: USAID/Afghanistan

Radio announcers in Afghanistan.

Community Radio Inaugurated in Kunduz Province

On December 13, 2005, provincial officials and community members formally inaugurated *Radio Jaihoon*, the first independent radio station in Imam Sahib, the capital of Kunduz Province. The Deputy Governor of Kunduz, the Mayor of Imam Sahib, the Head of the Information and Culture Department of Kunduz, and several local elders and students attended the inauguration.

Community radio stations play a vital role in Afghanistan, particularly in the rural parts of the country because battery-powered radio is often the only media capable of linking rural communities with the rest of the country and the outside world. Most community radios air a variety of news, entertainment, and self-help programs on topics such as literacy, health, and democracy and governance.

Prior to the overthrow of the Taliban, the only radio network in the country was Radio Afghanistan and much of its capacity was destroyed during the 22 years that followed the 1979 Soviet invasion. Beginning in 2002, USAID began setting up a network of community radio stations in Afghanistan. The network currently has 32 stations, each of which operates with full editorial independence.

Increasing the Capabilities of Legal Professionals

USAID continues to strengthen the independent judiciary and legal systems in Afghanistan. Beginning in August, more than 250 judges with less than a high school education have received training over two week sessions. Because there are no better qualified people available, the program emphasizes retraining existing judges. From December 3-17, a third training session began at the Supreme Court for some of Afghanistan's least educated judges from Kapisa, Parwan, Ghazni, Wardak and Logar Provinces.



A newly built courthouse in Afghanistan where judges receive training. Photo: USAID/Afghanistan

The training focused on human rights, international conventions, laws, judicial skills and attitudes, and judicial independence. Judges also received resource materials covering regulations on counter narcotics, juvenile violations, anti-corruption, and the structure of courts in Afghanistan. Follow-up training is planned for participants.



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Training and Resources Improve Community-Based Healthcare for Women



Afghanistan's health indicators place women's health among the lowest in the world. Approximately 1,600 mothers die per 100,000 live births. However, there is progress to change these statistics.

USAID is boosting women's health in provincial regions of Afghanistan. Recently graduated nurses and midwives participated in a job fair on November 30th in Mazar-e-Sharif to exchange information and network. Additionally 28 health practitioners from Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Herat received training in essential obstetric care to raise awareness about women's health and to standardize treatment. The coursework heightens safe motherhood practices and helps health professionals meet national clinical standards. Across Afghanistan's provinces, doctors, nurses, and midwives also just completed 189 refresher training modules in community health, post-natal care, and mental health.

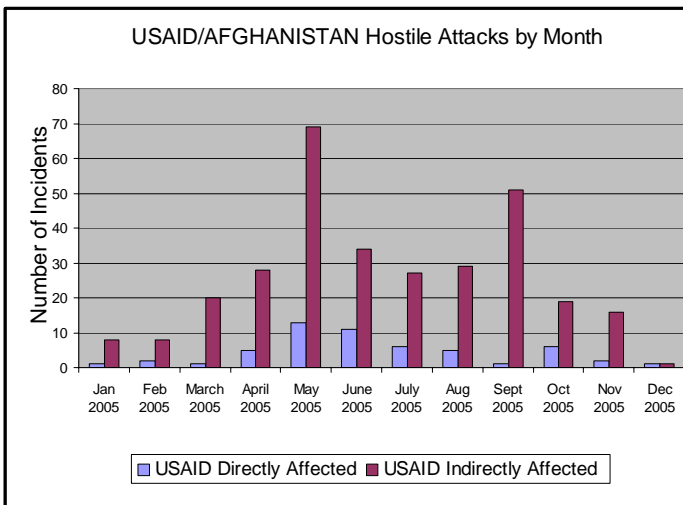
USAID has trained over 5,000 community health workers. Approximately 337 midwives have graduated from USAID-funded training courses since 2003.

Health practitioners focus on women and infants' health. Photo: USAID/Afghanistan

SECURITY INCIDENTS

From December 8-28, there were five hostile attacks, including three which directly affected USAID operations. There have been no fatalities, but seven people have been injured.

On December 18, 2005, four U.S. Protection and Investigations (USPI) escort vehicles were attacked while driving on the Ring Road in Helmand Province. Escorts were returning from a site visit in Helmand's Sagin district. One person was injured and one vehicle was damaged due to the attack. USPI provides security for USAID road activities.



The main purpose of the security incident graph is to provide a general update on security incidents as they relate to reconstruction in Afghanistan. The graph is simply a mechanism for tracking security incidents and does not analyze incidents or attempt to discern the motives or affiliation of the perpetrators. The focus of the graph is the frequency of incidents and their impact on USAID's work and also that of the development community writ large. The graph does not attempt to track all incidents regularly faced in Afghanistan.